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Note by Dr A. S. Buchan

JOHN BESEMERES.

A 2

a notes & pref.
by A. Dyke

Dr Burham hope
Mrs Howard will
do him the honour
to accept of this very
scarce Tract.

BIBLIOTHECA BELLEIANA

A. P. Buchanan.
London 1810.

THE

DOCTRINE,

&c. &c. &c.

THE

DOCTRINE

OF

PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY

BRIEFLY

INVALIDATED.

By JOHN DAWSON, of Sedbergh.

SECOND EDITION.

TO WHICH IS NOW ADDED

AN APPENDIX.

And, binding Nature fast in *Fate*,
Left *Free* the Human will.

POPE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1803.

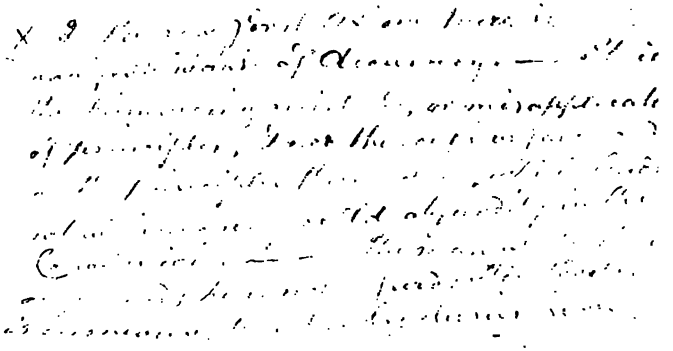
W. Flint, Printer, Old Bailey.

130. g. 111.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE substance of the following arguments was drawn up in a private correspondence on the first appearance of Dr. PRIESTLEY'S ILLUSTRATIONS, &c. and the writer, judging by himself, that it might give the readers of this controversy pleasure to see it placed in *various* points of view, ventured to let his little Tract go to the press. The Author cannot think his arguments amount to a *demonstration;* (for seldom, indeed, do metaphysical subjects admit of so cogent a proof) but he flatters himself, that they will be powerful enough to throw a strong suspicion on the truth of the doctrine he opposes; and such a one as will

give the suggestions of *common sense* great weight in every philosophic mind that is not already warped by some theoretic prejudice. Much might be urged on this last particular, but to say more would be inconsistent with the intended brevity of this Tract; which is submitted to the candour of the Public with a better view than to animadvert on opinions, which might now be deemed in some degree personal.



THE

DOCTRINE

OF

PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY

BRIEFLY INVALIDATED.

In examining the doctrine of necessity, I shall endeavour to bring what I have to say upon the subject into as narrow a compass as possible, and for that purpose the following axioms are premised; as in all sciences, some principles must be taken for granted, else nothing can be proved.

Axiom I.—If we make a false supposition, and reason justly from it, a contradiction, or absurdity will be contained in the conclusion. [To avoid ambiguity, it may be needful to observe here, that the

reasoning made use of to bring out the absurdity, must be of a proper and uniform kind; viz. geometrical, metaphysical, moral, &c. according as the subject is of a geometrical, metaphysical, or moral nature.]

Axiom II.—It must likewise be taken for granted (as it does not admit of proof) that every action or exertion voluntarily made, is with a design, or in hopes of obtaining some end. [For, it is evident, where there is *a full conviction* of the impossibility of this, no rational being will make any attempt or exertion at all.]

Axiom III. — All practical principles must either be *founded in truth*, or *believed to be so* for the moment that they operate.†

These axioms being taken for granted, let us suppose the doctrine of necessity to be *true*, and that its truth is discovered to us in such a manner, and is so strongly impressed upon our minds as to become a practical principle; then upon this suppo-

sition, by the second axiom, motives of all kinds must cease to operate.

To illustrate this, let us take one event, in which we are all equally concerned, viz. the time and circumstances of our death. Supposing, therefore, that at, or before my entrance into this world, the time of my leaving it was *fixed*, and that I *entirely believed* it to be so; no circumstance throughout life, no possible situation in which I could be placed, would operate as a motive, so as to make me use even the slightest endeavour, either to lengthen out, or shorten the period of my existence. This must be allowed upon the supposition under consideration. And if this be the case with regard to so momentous an event, it will certainly hold true of any other.

Hence, this conclusion may be fairly drawn, viz. that where the doctrine of necessity is firmly believed, and made use of as a practical principle, *motives cease to operate.*

But, upon the certain and infallible *operation* of motives, the whole scheme of necessity is founded. This doctrine, therefore, taken in this light, is destructive of itself.

In the next place, let us suppose the doctrine of necessity to be true, but that it does not (as we find is really the case) operate as a practical principle, and then attend to the consequence.

The following observations must be premised before this supposition can be properly examined.

A practical principle, for the *instant* that it operates, must be seen, or felt, to be speculatively true, else it could not answer the end intended. For a full conviction of its being false at the very time it ought to influence our conduct, would certainly destroy its effect. This I think cannot be denied. Examples in real life might be found in

abundance to illustrate this supposition. We daily see errors in opinion (or of prejudice) made the foundation of our practice, which when our minds are better informed cease to operate, and give place to the opposite truths.

Or in other words. The moment that the error of any practical principle is discovered, and in such a manner as to present itself to us upon every occasion, it will cease to operate, and the opposite truth, will instantly take its place, and influence our conduct accordingly.

The next observation which I intend to ground my reasoning upon, cannot be directly proved, but it is hoped its truth will not be denied me. I suppose then, that in a future state, our faculties will be enlarged, our understandings enlightened, and our apprehensions quickened in such a degree, that the truths which we now attain to with difficulty and much study, will then appear

as axioms, or be classed amongst the first principles of our knowledge, and hence serve as a basis for making further discoveries by reason. This must be the case upon the natural suppositon, that the righteous in another life, make a *continual progress* in *knowledge* and happiness.

If therefore, as it was supposed before, philosophical necessity be a *truth*, and likewise discoverable by human reason; in some future period of our existence, liberty, as opposed to this *truth*, must cease to operate as a practical principle, and give place to ideas of necessity, which like all intuitive truths, will ever be present to the mind; and, consequently, as has been proved before, reduce us to a state entirely torpid.

Here then is discovered a barrier or limit, to which human nature in its progress in *knowledge* can never arrive: and which the subtile metaphysician by standing on tiptoe has already got a sight of.—Must we

then in a future state be under the disagreeable necessity of petitioning the Deity to darken our understandings, and blunt our penetration, in order that we may enjoy the greater happiness? *Common sense* revolts from such an idea!

If analogical reasoning be allowed of, the above conclusion may be applied with equal force to all superior beings, and the same limit prescribed to their progress in knowledge.

From what has been said above, I think it is very evident, supposing necessity to obtain, that intelligence, when increased to a certain degree, is destructive of activity; or in other words, that intelligence and activity, cannot exist together in the same subject, unless the first of these be confined within certain limits. One of these limits has just been pointed out, and the other must coincide with *nothing*. For, where there is no intelligence, activity is not to be conceived. Now, this consequence, or

that activity should be destroyed by the rational faculties being enlarged, is surely exceedingly parodoxical; and hence, adopting principles which lead directly to it, is certainly going a long way to serve an hypothesis.

It perhaps may be objected, that even in a being whose faculties are sufficiently enlarged to see every thing as it really is, and who classes the doctrine of necessity among intuitive truths, his motives and propensities to action may be increased in the same proportion, and therefore his activity prevented from being destroyed.

The last-mentioned axiom is a sufficient answer to this objection. For, it has been there observed, that when this doctrine has taken full possession of the mind, no motives *however strong* can operate to any effect.

Hence till the contrary of this can be proved, the arguments above made use of remain in full force, and all the absurdities that have been pointed out as connected

with this doctrine, must stand or fall along with it.

To illustrate this subject a little further. It may be observed, that many truths which are scarcely within the ken of children, become afterwards, *when they are grown to maturity*, self-evident principles, and take the name of axioms. If this be the case, and this life be but the infancy of our existence, the doctrine of necessity, which we have already got a sight of, must by analogy, in a future state, become a part of our intuitive knowledge.

Again: Let us suppose the mental faculties of some acute metaphysician to be a little enlarged, and that by brooding over the doctrine a sufficient time, it takes such firm possession of his mind, as to present itself upon every occasion in the same manner as any other intuitive truth; will he not by this means be brought into a worse situation than the madman who imagined that he was made of glass? The fear of being

broken to pieces kept his person inactive, and if the supposition had been *true*, the epithet *mad* would have been very improperly applied to him. But though the principle gone upon by the philosopher is here supposed to be really true, and his subsequent reasoning quite accurate, he is brought thereby into as bad, nay even into a worse situation than the madman; for the more he contemplates the subject, the more obstinate his complaint must grow; whereas the madman stands a chance for cure, if by proper examination he can be convinced of his error. Hence, it appears, that it is equally unfortunate to know either too much or too little.

However absurd such *conclusions* may seem, however contrary to our warmest hopes and wishes, they are the *inevitable* consequence of supposing the doctrine of necessity, to be true. If, therefore, the above reasoning can be depended upon, by the first axiom this doctrine must be groundless.

The two pillars upon which the doctrine of philosophical necessity stands, are the *infallible operation of motives,* and the *Divine Prescience;* each of which we will now proceed to examine.

If being determined by motives or acting according to reason, which means precisely the same thing, constitute necessity, no rational being can be free; indeed it is not possible to conceive such a state. Even the Author of the Universe, might we venture to reason concerning the Divine Nature, must be as absolutely under the influence of this principle, as the lowest of his creatures. But, where ever there is necessity, it must be imposed: it cannot be conceived otherwise. With regard to mankind, the necessity must be imposed by the Deity, but who or what must impose it upon him? If the *nature of things* be called this powerful agent, we are amusing ourselves with words without meaning, for the attributes of all beings are just what he has made them. If, therefore, necessity *be imposed* (and it cannot be conceived otherwise, any more than

that a body of any particular shape has never *been figured*) it must be by a *Superior.*

It will now, I imagine, be thought high time to examine the principle adopted, and the arguments made use of, by which such a monstrous absurdity is brought forth. The *principle* is *philosophical necessity* with regard to the human species. The *arguments* are analogical; going in a direct line from the human to the Divine Nature. If we suppose the first to be false, the dispute is at an end, indeed it is begging the question; the arguments must therefore be called in question, and accordingly examined, for one or both must inevitably be erroneous.

By whatever method philosophical necessity is proved with regard to the human species, the same arguments will apply with equal force to all beings, whose faculties are the same as theirs in kind, however superior in degree. The error therefore must arise from reasoning *analogically*, or

from *one* kind of being to *another* whose nature is *essentially different*. And this indeed I take to be a fruitful source of error both in metaphysics and divinity.

Now, the object upon which we first exercise the reasoning faculty, is matter: its impulses, motions, &c. and our language is framed accordingly, and becomes frequently figurative when applied *to other substances*, and our reasoning at the same time analogical. And, the reasoning by which philosophical necessity is proved, is in a great measure analogous to that made use of concerning impulse and motion;*

* The necessarian asserts that the *soul* cannot act or think until it be first acted upon, and likewise that the intensity, &c. of its action is exactly proportioned to the cause that produced it. [Any variation in the manner or direction of its thinking or acting, he accounts for in the same manner.]

The natural philosopher asserts, that *matter* cannot move, or act upon other matter, till it be first acted upon, and that the intensity, &c. of its action is exactly propor-

and, as matter, and the thinking principle in man are (perhaps) essentially different, is

---

tioned to the cause that produced it. [Likewise, that any variation in its direction or manner of acting must be accounted for in the same way.] From this view of *matter*, the philosopher looks upon it as entirely *inert*; and must not the necessarian, for reasons equally strong, come to the same conclusion concerning the *soul*, or thinking principle in man? And, if this be granted, I imagine it will be allowed by all sides to have no higher origin than any other part of the animal machine. Hence, I think, it will easily appear, that a necessarian, by pursuing this principle, must likewise be a materialist.[1] But should this difficulty be got over, or rather be looked upon as none at all, there still remains one behind, even upon this supposition, which to me, at least, appears unanswerable.

For should the necessarian be asked *why* he will not allow that the soul can act or think till it first be acted upon, perhaps he may answer, that he cannot *conceive* it to be possible; as a better reason, I believe, will not easily be found. But may not his opponent make use of the same argument against the doctrine of materialism, upon which that of necessity seems to be founded? For, he may safely affirm that he cannot *conceive* how any particular arrangement or modification of the *inert* particles of matter can make the compound capable of perception.[2] Hence, where arguments equally strong oppose each other, nothing can be proved.

there not from what has just gone before, a strong presumption that the proof may not be altogether to be depended upon? If the foregoing reasoning be of any weight, the conclusion to be drawn from thence must be quite obvious. For, from the supposition of the above-mentioned principle being *true*, the *arguments* by which this truth is proved, are found to be *fallacious*; that is, the arguing analogically from one substance to another whose nature is essentially different, cannot be justified.

It will easily be perceived, I do not give this in the demonstrative stile, but only suggest, where it appears probable to me an error may lie concealed. It is a subject which would bear to be considerably enlarged upon, but to give a hint for further consideration was all I designed.

The arguments in favour of necessity drawn from the *Divine Prescience*, come now to be examined.

Events which are foreseen by us, must be certain and determined in every circumstance in which they are foreseen. This is quite evident; indeed it is only expressing the same thing different ways. The remark will likewise hold true with respect to every other being, how much soever superior to man, who looks upon time and place; upon past, present, and future, in the same light that we do; that is, to all intelligences whose faculties are the *same* in kind, however superior to each other in degree, and consequently whose essence is the same. But can we draw the same conclusion with the same certainty concerning the *foreknowledge* of that *Being* whose essence is *entirely different* from ours? I have before endeavoured to prove the fallaciousness of this kind of reasoning. Taking it for granted that necessity obtains with regard to man, from thence ascending to the Deity, an absurdity was found in the conclusion. In this case if it be allowed, that every thing fore-known by man is certainly fixed

and determined, from thence ascending to the Deity, is there not room to expect that an equal or similar absurdity will be found in the conclusion? For, if there be an error, it arises from the same cause in each case; that is, from applying the same kind of arguments to finite and infinite, or to beings whose essences are entirely different. But, if the same cause operate in each case, it must have the same effect.

From what has gone before, I think it may be inferred, that the two principles or sources from which the doctrine of necessity is proved (viz. the infallible operation of motives in the manner the necessarian understands it, and the Divine Prescience) cannot both be true. For either we must or we must not be allowed to carry our arguments from the human to the Divine Nature. In the first case we have found a gross absurdity to be the consequence of taking this doctrine for granted; therefore, by the first axiom it must be false, as proved by the operation of motives. But in the

second case, if we cannot argue from the human to the Divine Nature, the Divine Prescience cannot be brought as *any proof of its being true,* as has been shewn above.

Now, as the advocates for this doctrine have attempted to prove its truth by arguments drawn from each of these sources, and given the conclusions thence arising with equal confidence; the having demonstrated that *both* cannot be depended upon, will I think appear as a presumptive proof against the infallibility of either. And if this be allowed, our *feelings* and *common sense,* which are strongly on the side of liberty, will greatly outweigh all doubtful metaphysical conclusions on this intricate subject.

If, in objection to the above reasoning, it be asserted, that the *knowledge* of the Diety is the same in kind with ours, and that he is *self-determined,* I would ask whether it be not as difficult to conceive a rational being to be actuated and deter-

mined by reasons, or motives, in a manner *altogether different* from what happens among mankind, as to conceive the *knowledge* of any being to be *different* in *kind* from ours? For, if we attempt to examine into the meaning of *self-determined*, we shall find ourselves entirely at a loss, and not able to affix any ideas at all to the term. If, therefore, the *knowledge* of the Deity must be the *same* in *kind* with ours, because we cannot conceive it otherwise, will it not follow for the very same reason, that he must be determined by motives or reasons in the same manner as we are?

The necessarian therefore begs the question when he admits one supposition and rejects the other, according as his side of the argument requires it. But if, as is most consistent, both be treated in the same manner, that is, both supposed to be different from what we experience among mankind, we shall avoid several absurdities. However, if any person should still imagine, that he can conceive what is meant by the Deity's being

self-determined, I must insist upon it, that he has as clear an idea of the same thing in himself, and therefore measured by this standard, he is equally free. Hence, in this case, the arguments of the necessarian may be turned against himself. For, if God be self-determined, and consequently free, and it may as easily be conceived that man is self-determined (and no other circumstance be taken into the account) it may with the same certainty be concluded that man is free.

This subject, though of some consequence in the *theory*, can be of no use in the *practice* of morals. For, it may be taken for granted, that principles which do not influence our practice are altogether useless: and it has been proved above, that philosophical necessity cannot act as a practical principle.

Though this conclusion concerning necessity will certainly hold true, as to the bulk of mankind, yet it is much to be feared, that it may furnish the half-learned libertine

with an excuse for the commission of every crime.

Let us now recapitulate in a few words what has been said upon this subject.

In the first place, I have endeavoured to prove the fallaciousness and absurdity of this doctrine by considerations drawn from human nature in an improved state: Then attempted to demolish *one*, at least, of the two pillars upon which it stands, and by that means (as they were looked upon to be equally firm) to raise a strong suspicion that the *other* is neither so well founded, nor so much to be depended upon, as the necessarian has supposed. This airy metaphysical fabric being brought into so tottering a situation, I have then called in the assistance of our *feelings* and *common sense* in order to complete the demolition.

The *inutility* of this doctrine has likewise been demonstrated. And as true causes or principles in reasoning, are generally at-

tended with salutary effects or conclusions, the want of this result or badge of truth, ought also to make us cautious in this inquiry, that we be not imposed upon by the mere force of metaphysical subtilty and ingenuity.

"Non bene conveniunt, nec in unâ sede morari
Metaphysics, & Mathematics. —
And I must confess that the perusal of the
tract hath not increased my respect for
reasoning powers of these latter Gentlemen.
— It is probable that Man is entirely
a free agent; because the idea appears al-
-gether inseparable from that of a rational
Being: But the person, who would endeavour
the proof, must handle his Tools in a very
different way from this Author. His
Principles are neither clearly, nor correctly
laid down; neither are his deductions made
in right lines. — It is saying very little
to the purpose, that a man would cease to a
entirely, if he seriously believed himself under
influence of Necessity, & that his hourly Conduct
gives the Lie to any such supposition. The
truth is; that, in an infinite majority of the
actions of his life, he is as little under the in-
fluence of reason as the rest of his fellow truth
about him: — Instinct, or something very
like it; Sympathy; Sensation, including the
Appetites; Curiosity, operating with all the power
of a Passion; Habit &c &c compose the secret
Springs which put him in motion; & Reason
must be considered rather as a regulating,
than as an impelling, principle; & those pre-
-cious decisions have little, if any, influence
on Conduct.

His attempts to reason concerning the actual terms of our existence here in this world, from what may be, or, as he presumes, to say, must be our condition in a future State, is assuredly a new mode of Induction; And it is equally new, that, supposing a man to have indulged a speculative error in the measure of his conceptions concerning the Divine Mind, he must of necessity follow up that error by forming similar notions concerning the freedom of his own: P. 26 — & that for no better reason than because he, the author, "insists upon it". The Corollary, too, which he hence deduces is equally loose. — Here it is; —— "If God be self-determined and (if) it may as easily be conceived that Man is so;" — (in his mode of forming the sentence he omits this latter if, but it is obvious that he means to take full credit for its admission, dubious as it is;) — "it may with the same certainty be concluded that Man is free." making the certainty of the conclusion to depend upon the ease with which a conception may be formed. — The Author certainly sets off with saying that he does not offer what he has to say as "demonstrative" proof: Now, I cannot help thinking he will be puzzled to find any body inclined to accept this as a Proof of any description.

P. 15

His conclusive triumph, as it should seem he conceives it to be, in having shewn the incompatibility of the two principal arguments of his adversaries, viz. the operation of motives in man & the divine prescience is altogether one of the most singular specimens of ratiocination which I ever saw. — Vide P. 24 —

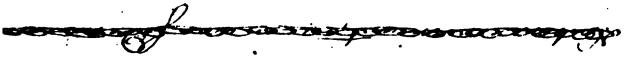
"I have demonstrated that both cannot be depended on" — & this I consider as "a presumptive proof against the value of either" — See also P. 27 —

— Porter & Pott Wine make a most abominable mixture. "I have taken some pains to prove" the worthlessness of the former; & therefore, — Yes! — therefore, "I have strong suspicions" that the latter is a vile beverage.

Q. E. D.

Or —

Mr. Dawson of Sedbergh is a most able Mathematician: He has also been dabbling in Metaphysics. — Now, Metaphysics do not admit of demonstrative Proof; — Ergo — His Mathematics are — as o —



APPENDIX.

A REPLY to the Criticism upon the Pamphlet, called "*Philosophical Necessity briefly Invalidated,*" inserted in the Monthly Review, for July 1781.

In the argument p. 6 and 7, of the pamphlet, the Reviewer asserts, there is an *obvious fallacy*. He says, the author confounds "the belief of the doctrine of necessity, as a general principle, with the certain foresight of a *particular* event." I would ask here, in the first place, if in a *general* doctrine every *particular* case be not included? If *every* event be absolutely determined, as to time, place, &c. &c. with all their connected circumstances (which I take to be what is meant by the doctrine of necessity,) and the *belief* of this be so strongly impressed upon the mind, as to become a practical principle, or to act as intuitive truth, the same may certainly be

asserted of any *particular* event. It may be asserted in regard to the whole universe, that nobody can exist in two places at the same time, and this assertion will undoubtedly apply to any *particular* body. It likewise, I believe, will be granted, that no motive, however strong, can make us act in *contradiction* to, or in *violation* of this truth, or as it may properly be called, this practical principle.

The author, p. 6, supposes the belief of the doctrine of necessity to become a practical principle, or to *act* as an intuitive truth. The Reviewer, in his observations on the passage, supposes, that the belief of this doctrine *does not act* as a practical principle, with regard to every *particular* event. If the *suppositions* therefore be *different*, the *conclusions* must be *so too*, if properly drawn.

From this circumstance, surely, no *obvious fallacy* can be proved as to the conclusion deduced. And of the supposition, it cannot be meant, for the first paragraph,

p. 8, positively asserts, that the doctrine of necessity does *not* operate as a practical principle.

This criticism, therefore, seems to be intended only for those readers, who will never give themselves the trouble of examining the subject, and who may reasonably be supposed to amount to a great majority.

Whether man will always be improving in knowledge throughout eternity, although the belief of it be pleasing to the imagination, and consonant to reason, will not admit of positive proof, neither will the existence of intermediate beings betwixt the human and the Divine Nature be allowed by some; but that God *can* create beings much superior to man in knowledge, we cannot, nay we dare not deny. May we not then suppose, that to these beings our demonstrative knowledge would become intuitive, or that whatever truth *we* arrive at by demonstration, *they* would have by intuition.

The doctrine of necessity, therefore, if it do admit of a demonstration, would to them become an intuitive truth, or operate as a practical principle, and consequently their situation be such as has been pointed out in the tract.

Should man, should these beings act in contempt of, or in contradiction to any of *these* practical maxims, viz. that the whole is greater than a part, or that it is impossible for a body to exist in two places at the same time, &c. &c. the epithet mad would immediately be bestowed upon them. And, I would ask, whether any intuitive truth can be treated with neglect without the danger of incurring this censure. Should this be the case, what would be the condition of these enlightened beings we have mentioned above? For either they must, or they must not, submit to the direction of intuitive principles, and either way, the absurdity of their conduct will clearly appear from what has been mentioned before.

This doctrine, then, being taken for granted, there appears to be a limit prescribed to omnipotence, and that God cannot create a being of such enlarged faculties, as that to him our demonstrative knowledge may appear intuitive.

It will not, perhaps, be easy to point out any other truth, either intuitive, or demonstrative, whose influence upon our conduct, if constantly attended to, would make us ridiculous, and render us unfit for every situation in life. This truth being, therefore, of so singular a nature, to some people, at least, it may appear with a suspicious aspect.

In opposition to the above remarks, the Reviewer says, "We know that the "firmest belief of the doctrine of necessity, "doth not render the mind torpid and inac-"tive." And for the proof of this, he refers us to Doctor *Priestley*, who is a living example to the contrary. Now, this only proves, that he acts as if he did not believe it, or in

this same manner as those who have never heard of the doctrine; consequently, the whole of the argument, which they have here made use of, is foreign to the purpose, and is only an assertion of what was never denied. He next asks, "what should "hinder but that with the most *advanced* "*knowledge* there should exist the most "perfect felicity in superior intelligences." I answer, that this doctrine, by the Reviewer supposed demonstrable, may operate as an intuitive truth. For this would render them entirely torpid, and *such a state* appears to be inconsistent with felicity.

Here the whole merit of the dispute lies, and it is incumbent upon those critics to point out, how a being thus enlightened, can be influenced by motives; or, which is the same thing, to prove that the second axiom in the tract is false. This would be of greater weight than any thing they have thus far observed.

Arguments in favour of necessity, drawn from the *Divine Prescience*, are not easily got over by those who defend a contrary doctrine; and, perhaps, they do not admit of a direct answer. But in p. 14, there is a difficulty started, of equal magnitude on the other side of the question, and equal difficulties on opposite sides, must destroy each other's effect. Would not, then, an impartial critic, either have obviated, or have allowed the force of this difficulty; particularly as the two suppositions are brought so close together, and set in opposition to each other in p. 19 and 20. But the passing it over in silence, comes near to an acknowledgment that it appears insuperable.

The proof here given, that fore-knowledge in God, is of the same nature with fore-knowledge in man, is precisely of the same kind with that by which God might be proved to be under the influence of necessity. But in this case, the absurdity of the consequences attending such a conclusion,

is so glaring, that we cannot hesitate a moment in rejecting the arguments brought in support of it. What confidence then can we place in them with regard to the other?

If the above observations be of any weight, the criticism in the Review upon this Tract must be partial and uncandid.

FINIS.

W. Flint, Printer, Old Bailey, London.

ANECDOTES

MEDICAL, CHEMICAL,

AND

CHIRURGICAL;

COLLECTED, ARRANGED, AND TRANSMUTED,

BY

An Adept.

Ludo et joco uti licet, cum gravibus seriisque satisfecerimus.
Cic. Off. i.

Dum nihil habemus majus, calamo ludimus. Phædrus.

VOL. I.

London.

PRINTED FOR J. CALLOW, CROWN COURT,
PRINCES STREET, SOHO.

1816.

Printed by W. Thorne. Red Lion Court, Fleet Street.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

TO

JAMES GREGORY, M.D. F.R.S.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,

PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE OF PHYSIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

AND

FIRST PHYSICIAN TO HIS MAJESTY IN SCOTLAND, &c. &c. &c.

SIR,

I HAVE been recently occupied in discharging the last sad duties of mortality to the remains of an old and dear friend, formerly a promising pupil of yours, but now mingled with the assembly of the grave; a victim to that fell scourge of genius, and opprobrium to the medical art —pulmonary consumption.

In arranging the few effects, pertaining to my late friend, which consisted chiefly of

a select library of books, relating to his own profession, I discovered the collection contained in the subsequent pages. The articles were written on detached scraps of paper, carefully pasted, with some small pretension to alphabetical order, into an old folio copy of Hippocrates, and appear to have been gleaned from a miscellaneous and rather extensive course of foreign and domestic reading.

Whether they were intended for publication at some future period, or were merely the amusement of long winter evenings, passed in a state of seclusion from society, or if they were undertaken to beguile the languid hours of declining health, are circumstances which cannot now be ascertained. The obscurity of the author's name precludes the possibility of his reputation being injured by their present appearance; while the eventual chance of their sale may, perhaps, assist in alleviating the distress of a sole surviving female relation, whose means of existence his death has tended considerably to curtail.

After having remained during the usual period assigned for study at the University of Edinburgh, and passed the customary preliminary examinations without censure, my late friend regularly received the degree of M. D. He afterwards sojourned a winter in London, and another on the Continent.

With an ample fund of professional reading, corrected and verified by careful attention to the practice of various public hospitals, and possessed of a liberal and independent mind, combined with gentle and endearing manners, the natural delicacy of his constitution, together with a not unamiable diffidence of his own talents, combined to make him prefer the attempt to obtain a decent competence in a respectable country market town, to the arduous struggle required to secure professional eminence in the metropolis.—But even these humble hopes were never realized.

When the moon of vaccination first illumined this hemisphere with her orient

horns,* the prejudices of education, and some leaning (natural enough in a bachelor) towards the misogamic doctrines of Malthus, who absurdly considers a super-abundant population as an evil, made him start some doubts respecting the ultimate benefit likely to accrue to the human species from the blessed discovery. This opinion afforded his brethren, who wisely looked to present profit from the novel practice, ground to raise the cry of prejudice against him, which had the effect of greatly depressing his naturally too delicate spirits.

Rumours to his disadvantage were also industriously circulated through the medium of a dashing Surgeon, Apothecary and Man-Midwife, who was moreover a

* Vide the hieroglyphic in the title-page of one of Dr. Lettsom's pamphlets on this important subject, where the learned Doctor has copied from Bryant's Mythology a print of the Deus Lunus, or Egyptian Mnevis, bearing a crescent on its shoulder, converting the bull into a cow, as an emblem of vaccination,—thus slily insinuating that this practice was well known to the ancient Egyptians; and only revived by Dr. Jenner.

Cornet of fencible cavalry, and who did all the medical trade of the neighbourhood. He of course laid all the ladies, who were flattered by his morning calls, when returning from drill, mounted on a prancing charger, dressed in scarlet regimentals laced with gold, his cranium bedecked with an umbrageous plumed helmet, and his bold obstetric fist supported by a terrific sabre in a sheath of burnished steel.

It is perfectly natural, that the person, by whose means a woman imagines that she is relieved from the painful pangs of parturition, should possess considerable influence over her mind; and the propriety, with which all married ladies counsel their husbands in the choice of their medical monitor, is a point not to be disputed. Who, indeed, can have a nearer or more serious interest in a man's life and health than the wife of his bosom? and who better fitted to save that, when endangered by disease, than the person by whom she believes her own to have been so often saved?

In short, against the dress of the Cornet, the address of the Apothecary, and the gossip of the Gyn-andre or Man-Midwife, in union with a combination of all the Ladies initiated in the mysteries of the Bona Dea, my poor, modest, meritorious friend stood no chance. Now and then, indeed, he took a guinea from a nervous old-maid, or a superannuated bachelor. But, as the small quantity of business that fell to his share was not sufficient to occupy his attention, he gradually ceased to attend to the little he had; he discontinued to inquire after his patients, and they of course ceased to require his visits; he became melancholy and dejected; rarely stirred from the small apartment which contained his books, except in the evening, when he occasionally amused himself with watering a few plants that grew in the little garden behind his residence, or strolled by moonlight along the banks of the murmuring rivulet, which skirted its boundary. When the approach of winter superseded the ne-

cessity of attention to his favourite flowers, he no longer went abroad.

On paying my annual Christmas visit to the friend and companion of my early years, I marked, with grief, the hectic that flushed his cheek; and though the flame of friendship imparted a faint and temporary lustre to his languid eye, I heard, with deep concern, the hollow cough that too surely presaged his approaching fate. He appeared perfectly aware of his situation, but seemed to be resigned, and careless, or rather indignant, about life. With the utmost difficulty could I prevail with him to allow me to contribute my mite to his slender funds, in order to try the effect of a voyage to Lisbon. He appeared to resent the neglect, with which the world had treated his merits and acquirements, and to regard his death, which took place before the vessel in which he sailed reached the mouth of the Tagus, as a kind of retaliation for the ill usage and neglect he had experienced from mankind.

This brief account of the short and evil days of my friend, for he died in his 30th year, will afford some explanation of the sarcastic turn of many of the Anecdotes, the melancholy tendency of others, and give a sort of reason for the aim of several of them being evidently directed against a most useful and respectable branch of the profession, by an individual member of which he unfortunately considered himself to have been injured.

Respecting the merits of the subsequent collection I shall offer no opinion: that point can only be settled by the reception it meets with from the public.

No class of literary men possess more varied information, or peruse more books, than the medical practitioners of Great Britain. To the fashionable Physician in high practice, this work may serve as a vehicular companion—may help to unbend his mind after the fatigue of appearing to listen to the fancied ills of wealth and in-

dolence — and may, perhaps, occasionally furnish him with an appropriate Anecdote to alleviate the languor of disease, divert the attention of the hypochondriac from himself, and so cheat him of a moment's misery — or haply, by some apt allusion, suspend that sorrow, which looks for relief only from the hovering hand of Death.

To the younger Practitioner, it may answer the purpose of beguiling the tedious expectation of employment, and prepare his mind, by precept and example, for the manifold slights, crosses, disappointments, and instances of ingratitude, which he cannot fail to encounter in the course of his professional career.

Should it perchance fall into any other hands than those of the profession, it will assist in dispelling that belief in the quackery and imposture of medicine, which the general progress of human knowledge tends daily to diminish, and to increase the respect due to the liberal, honest, and manly professor of the healing art alone; — a

character, which not only your precepts, and the lessons of your worthy father, have ever tended to form and to support; but which has been justly exemplified in the uniform tenor of your own life and professional demeanour.

The subsequent pages exhibit abundant evidence of the diligence employed by the Compiler, in selecting some of the beauties with which your works abound;—a circumstance, which suggested the idea, and must constitute the apology for the liberty assumed in requesting your Patronage of this orphan Anthology.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

With respect and gratitude,

Your obedient servant,

And former pupil,

THE EDITOR.

w/c